been published in any standard astronomical journals. Hence, no steps are proposed to be taken to provide assistance at this stage.

Expenditure on foreign visit by Directors of CSIR Labs

3162. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the report of the Controller and Auditor General of India for the year ending March 1999 after examining the records of IIP, NPL, NCL, CBRI, NISCOM, NIO, NAL, CMERI, IICT, CDRI, CMRI, IMTEC, NEERI, CFTRI, laboratories of CSIR for the period 1994—99, states that the Directors of the above institutes spent freely on foreign visits, even though many such visits couldn't be said to help R and D efforts; and

(b) if so, the details of foreign tours of Directors and Scientists of the above laboratories for the above period, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in the Report No. 5 of 2000 has observed that Directors of 3 of the CSIR national labs/Instts. incurred expenditure on foreign visits from Laboratory Reserve Fund (LRF). The table below shows the details of expenditure incurred on foreign tours of Directors and Scientists of these three Labs/Instts. year-wise:—

(Rupees in lakh)

Name of Laboratory	Period	Number of Scientists	Number of Foreign visits	Total expenditure from LRF
IIP	1997-99	24	32	48.98
CBRI	1998-99	2	2	1.22
NIO	1998-99	3	3	3.71
TOTAL		29	37	53.91

The Governing Body, w.e.f. April 1994 permitted the expenditure on deputation abroad of Scientists/Directors for Business Development activities.

Stepping up of an Indo-US Science and Technology Forum

3163. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and US have signed an agreement to set up an Indo-US Science and Technology forum;

(b) if so, the main objectives of the forum; and

(c) how Government Plan to implement these objectives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (c) Yes sir. An agreement on the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum was signed on March 21, 2000 in New Delhi. The main objectives of the Forum are : (1) To facilitate and promote Indo-US interaction of governments, academia and industry in Science and Technology and other related areas. (2) To focus on issues of common concern and activities of mutual benefit while exploring trends in science and technology. (3) To promote research and development, the transfer of technology and creation of a comprehensive electronic reference source for Indo-US Science and Technology Cooperation. (4) To promote an active electronic exchange of ideas and opportunities in Indo-US Science and Technology Cooperation.

The Indo-US Science and Technology Forum has been registered as a society under Indian Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. The Governing Body of this society consists of 7 members each nominated by the Indian Government and the US Government. The Governing Body is responsible for drawing up the plans to implement the objectives of the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum.